

A dirt road leads to a ranch gate. A sign on a black post reads "LADY RANCH". The background shows green hills and a blue sky with white clouds. The title "First I'm NOBODY" is overlaid on the top half of the image.

First I'm  
**NOBODY**

Kasandra Elaine

“Who did you say we are today?” Duke asked as the bus pulled away from the station.

“Lee and Amanda Barkley.”

“Oh yeah. If someone calls my name, would you please punch me? It was much easier when I didn’t have any identity; now I have too many,” Duke grumbled as he turned to look out the window.

“After Grand Junction, where are we going?” Skylar asked in hushed tones.

“Oh, I don’t know. Just on west I suppose.” Duke stretched his legs out as best he could. “I sure wish God would reveal a little more to me. Then maybe we could just go home.”

“He will in His own time,” Skylar said as she picked up her overnight bag. “He’s never late in doing things. Remember that.”

Duke turned in his seat and looked into Skylar’s eyes. “He’s never late by whose clock?”

“His clock. You just have to learn patience.” Skylar reached into her carry-on bag and pulled out her Bible. “Here do some reading.”



First, I'm  
Nobody

by

Kasandra Elaine

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

First, I'm Nobody

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Contact Information: [info@thewildrosepress.com](mailto:info@thewildrosepress.com)

Cover Art by *Kim Mendoza*

The Wild Rose Press  
PO Box 708  
Adams Basin, NY 14410-0706  
Visit us at [www.thewildrosepress.com](http://www.thewildrosepress.com)

Publishing History  
First White Rose Edition, 2008  
Print ISBN 1-60154-262-3

Published in the United States of America

## Dedication

From Elaine:

To my only sister, Martha, who, as we have gotten older, has become a cherished friend. You and my favorite brother-in-law, Kenneth, have supported me through a lot of rough times.

Curtis, you and Myra are very special to me. You're the best Bubba.

Bud, what can I say, you're pushy and bossy, but I love you. You never let me, or Elisa down, and we put you through a lot. You and Vernell stepped up to the plate, and I love you.

Terry, I hope, even in heaven, God lets you know I'm published again. I love you and miss you.

From Kassy:

To my sisters: Krissy, the one with a tough exterior and a marshmallow heart; Karolyn, the independent one who likes to hide the hard things in her life from me; and Katrina, the baby who always had a mind of her own. My apologies to you all for having to follow me through school. I know it was hard living up to the "perfect student". If I had it all to do again, I'd work harder at letting myself get into a little trouble.

## Prologue

Their lone car traveled toward Oklahoma on a remote strip of a two-lane North Texas highway in the dim light of dusk. Joe and his companion were oblivious to their surroundings, consumed by the blaring rock music coming from the car's radio.

Their loud conversation was interrupted only by a pause to take another drink from the beer bottles clutched in their hands. As Joe took a deep draw of the amber liquid in his long-necked bottle, the car swerved off the edge of the road, throwing gravel and dirt into the air. He jerked the steering wheel and pulled the Mustang back onto the pavement.

"Hey man, you're driving in the ditch as much as you're driving on the road," slurred the teenage passenger.

"You insultin' my driving?" Laughter filled the vehicle. "I guess we're gonna have to sober up before we get to Oklahoma. Roll down the window and let some fresh air in here." The dry North Texas wind rushed in as they finished off their bottles of beer.

"Hey, Tom, watch this." The driver threw his bottle over the top of the car and hit a road sign as they passed by. The car swerved again and there was a jolt as the red Mustang hit something.

Joe twisted the steering wheel hard and pulled the car back into the right lane. Then he stomped on the brake, bringing the car to a squealing halt. For several long seconds, silence drifted through the twilight around the sports car as clouds of dust swirled around them.

Tom finally broke the eerie silence. "Man, what'd you hit?"

"I don't know. I didn't see anything. Did you?"

"Naw. Whatever you hit musta been big." Tom got out of the vehicle and staggered to the front. "Joe, you got a huge dent in this fender. Must've been a deer or somethin'. I'm gonna check back down the road and maybe see what it was."

Joe opened the door of the 1969 sports car with a shaking hand. "I gotta check this out. My dad's gonna kill me if his car gets messed up." He teetered his way around the car and dropped to his knees, moaning as he saw the damage.

The headlight was busted, and the fender had a big dent. Luckily, it wasn't rubbing the tire so he could drive the car on home to Broken Bow without having to call his father or a wrecker. The car was his dad's favorite, and he knew he was in serious trouble. His hand shook as he rubbed the deep dent.

A curse flew from his mouth. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand. "Dad's gonna kill me." Reaching up, he tried to pull the fender a bit straighter.

"Hey, Joe...you better come here."

Joe stood up, and the world tilted. He steadied himself for a moment with a hand on the car before weaving the few yards down the highway to where Tom stood staring into the ditch.

"What? Don't tell me I hit somebody's prize bull." Then he noticed the sick look on his friend's face.

Tom pointed to the ditch. The crumpled form of a man lay in the weeds. The boys stood and stared at the lifeless figure.

"Oh man! Is he dead?" Joe finally choked out; his whole body trembling.

"I can't see him breathing! What're we gonna do? We've got to get help."

Tom pulled out his cell phone and flipped it open.

Joe grabbed it away from him. "Man, we can't call the cops. I'll be charged with drunk driving, maybe even murder." He slumped to the ground beside the lifeless body in the grassy ditch. Damaging his father's classic car was bad enough. This could be the end of his life.

“We’ve got to do something,” Tom said. “We can’t just leave him here.”

“He’s already dead, so it won’t matter to him if we call for help tonight or if someone finds him tomorrow. He can’t be any more dead.”

With shaking hands, Joe began to search through the stranger’s pockets. All he found was a wallet containing a couple hundred dollars and some credit cards. He slipped the money out of the wallet.

“What are you doing?”

“Well, this won’t do him any good, and it will go a long way to fixing my dad’s car. Now let’s get out of here.” Joe shoved the money into one of his pockets and the wallet in another.

“Aren’t you gonna leave his wallet?”

“Nope.” He rose to his feet, suddenly feeling sober. Panic and a need to get away filled him.

The boys ran back to the car and started for home. A couple of miles away, Joe pulled the wallet from his pocket and tossed it out the window as they crossed a bridge over a large creek.

Tom looked at him for a long moment. “Doesn’t any of this bother you?”

Joe didn’t answer right away. Instead he pulled the car off onto the side of the road and opened the door. Leaning over, he threw up. When he finished, he pressed his back against the seat and wiped the bitter bile from his lips. He found himself longing for one more mouthful of the beer that had gotten him into this mess so he could get rid of the nasty taste.

“I don’t want to go to jail, and I don’t want my dad to ever find out what happened tonight.” Tears pooled in his eyes. His stomach clinched, and for a moment, he thought he might be sick again.

Tom reached over and patted him on the shoulder. “It’ll be okay. We’ll just come up with a good story, and no one will know any different. Besides, that guy shouldn’t have been walking this late anyway.”

Joe put the car into gear. The young men agreed to tell their folks that a deer had run out in front of them. It was believable and would keep them both out of trouble. At least that’s what they told each other.

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“He’s coming around.”

The words sounded distant. He opened his eyes only to be blinded by a colored swirl of flashing lights. Keeping his eyes closed was easier, so he quit struggling, and his eyelids fluttered shut again. Disembodied voices filled the darkness but made no sense as pain surged through his body. With pain like this, he couldn’t be dead and in heaven. He guessed hell was a possibility, but it seemed those voices he could hear in the distance wanted to help him. Hopefully that meant he was still alive.

“Hey, mister, can you tell us your name?”

He forced his eyes to open and tried to say something, anything, but nothing would come out. His head throbbed as though someone were driving nails through his skull. The swirling lights tormented his brain. He closed his eyes to block them out. It might be better if he had died. He stopped fighting and slid back into the darkness.

## Chapter One

Skylar McCrea drove toward her north Texas ranch in her dad's 1959 pickup. She sang along with an old tune on the radio, and her truck seemed to hum along with her. She had just mailed the entry fee to register her prize stallion for the upcoming horse show in Fort Worth. She prayed Skylark's Son would be as good a horse as his sire had been. Skylark had won a room full of trophies in his career.

Her singing halted when she spotted what appeared to be a leather jacket lying beside the road. As she drove by, it crossed her mind how often she had noticed various articles of clothing on or alongside the roadways of America. She wondered what people did as they drove along, just decide that one shoe wasn't needed anymore. In this case, it was a jacket someone had flung out the car window. Her curiosity got the better of her, so she turned the truck around and drove back to the spot where she had spied the jacket.

"Surely no one would have disposed of this on purpose," she mumbled as she examined the expensive-looking leather garment. She checked for identification but found nothing except three initials monogrammed on the inside breast pocket, JBC. She threw the jacket onto the seat of her truck and drove toward home.

A smile crossed Skylar's face as she drove through the gate of her ranch. She couldn't help but read the sign with great pleasure—Lazy M Ranch, Home of Skylark, Champion Thoroughbred. Pulling up to the house, she spotted her foreman, Redigo, walking toward the barn. She jumped out of the truck and ran to catch him.

"Redigo, what did Doc Peters say about Skylark's Son?"

The older man had been foreman of the Lazy M since she was a little girl and she loved him like an uncle. She looked at him objectively as she waited for his answer.

Even in his early fifties, he was still a handsome man. His black hair was beginning to gray at the temples, but that only made him look more distinguished.

He pulled his cowboy hat from his head and wiped the sweat from his brow with a red bandana as he answered, "He gave him a perfect bill of health."

She smiled and placed her truck keys in the pocket of her khaki colored Capri pants. "Great. He's all set to show in Fort Worth. I put the final papers in the mail this morning."

She fell into step beside him, and the two continued into the barn, where Billy, one of the ranch hands, was grooming their hope for a future champion.

"I got a call from Wilmington in Virginia." Redigo cast her a sidelong glance before he continued. "He's offered a ridiculous stud fee for Skylark. He begged me to get you to change your mind." He stepped over to the stall and propped both arms on the top rail. "Really, Skylar, what's your problem with him?"

She stuck her right foot on the bottom rail of the stall and gazed at Skylark's Son. "I saw one of his handlers mistreating a horse last year at the Atlanta show. I just think he needs to keep a closer eye on his investments."

"Did you mention the incident to Wilmington?" He opened the stall door and began to rub the horse's long nose.

"Yeah, the first time he called. When he made light of the whole thing, I told him to find stud service elsewhere." She watched in admiration as the foreman spoke soft, soothing words to the horse.

"Well, when I talk to him again, I'll make it very clear the Lazy M isn't interested in his business." He looked at Billy and said, "Good job, son. You're gonna make a horse handler yet." He patted the young man on the shoulder as he left the stall and closed the gate.

Skylar heard the intercom beep and walked to the speaker, "Yes, Addie, do you need something?"

"The flour you were supposed to pick up for me in town."

"Oh, I'm sorry. It's in the truck; I'll bring it right in."

As she left the barn, Redigo fell into step beside her. Just before they reached the pickup, Addie called out the

door for Skylar to come to the phone.

“You go on in; I’ll get the flour,” the foreman said.

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Redigo walked into the kitchen and placed the bag of flour on the counter as Skylar hung up the phone. Holding the brown jacket out toward her, he asked, “Who does this belong to?”

“I saw it on the side of the road, several hundred feet from the ranch entrance. I was curious and stopped to pick it up. It looks expensive. There’s no identification in it, so I can’t get it back to its owner.”

“I heard there was an accident last night along the stretch of road where you picked this up.” Redigo tossed the jacket over the back of a chair and then poured himself a cup of coffee.

“Yeah, I heard that, too,” Addie said. “Madge called this mornin’ and told me some fellow got hit by a car.”

“Hmm, maybe the jacket belongs to the victim,” Skylar said. “There’re some initials monogrammed on the inside. Was the man badly hurt?”

“Madge said they carried him into Denton to the hospital,” Addie said.

“Well, I’ll give Dan Tate a call later at the sheriff’s office and see if he knows anything.” Skylar reached over and pinched a piece of crust from the fried chicken Addie had dished up on a platter. A light rap on her knuckles from Addie’s wooden spoon warned her away before she had the chance to snatch another bite. She grinned. Her beloved housekeeper had eyes in the back of her head.

“You two get out of my kitchen. I’ll call you when lunch is ready.”

Skylar laughed and strode toward the door. Redigo settled his hat on his head and pushed the door open ahead of her. He obviously knew better than to question Addie’s authority in the kitchen. Skylar followed him out the door and back to the barn.

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“That was a great practice run,” Skylar commented as Billy walked Skylark’s Son over to where she and Redigo were standing.

Redigo snorted his disagreement. “It was okay, but Son’s still not clearin’ those triple jumps as well as I’d like

to see him do.” The foreman took the horse’s reins from Billy as he dismounted and led the thoroughbred toward the barn.

Skylar followed close behind him. “How much daylight do you want to see between the horse and the rails? Son just went that round ten seconds faster than Skylark ever did. You’re just partial. In your eyes no horse will ever be as good as Skylark.”

Redigo stopped and turned to face her, his dark brown eyes twinkling. “Listen here, you spoiled brat, don’t you go accusin’ me of being partial. I’m just tryin’ to get you another winner. If you think you can do better, be my guest.”

She stomped her foot in the dirt and looked him in the eyes. Her mouth twitched as she struggled to keep from smiling at her friend. “Why you old coot, you’re not just trying to get *me* another winner; training two world champions would be quite a feather in your hat.”

“Hey, would you two quit arguing? Skylark’s Son deserves some extra special treatment tonight, and you’re upsettin’ his delicate digestive system.” Billy took the reins from Redigo and shook his head as he started to walk away.

“You’d just better see to it that he gets an extra measure of those sweet oats, Billy. Else you’ll be lookin’ for a new place to laze away your time pretendin’ to be workin’.” Redigo smiled at Skylar as he teased the young man.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m quakin’ in my boots. Who do you think you’d get to take my place? Nobody wants to work for a grouchy old man like you. Besides, I’ve already dumped that extra measure in his bucket.” Billy laughed as he led Skylark’s Son into the barn.

“Young whippersnapper ain’t got no respect for his elders. I oughta fire him. Serve him right.”

Skylar walked up behind her foreman and pushed his battered Stetson forward on his head. “Yeah? Like Billy said, nobody’s rushing the front door to work for you, grouch.”

Redigo readjusted his hat as Skylar ran toward the front of the barn. “Git on up to the house, young lady, before I take a willow switch to you.”

She laughed at her foreman's joking threat while she made her way to the main house.

Later that evening she noticed the leather jacket hanging on the coat rack. Glancing at her watch, she realized it was too late to call her friend, Deputy Sheriff Dan Tate. She would call him first thing in the morning to see if the jacket belonged to the accident victim.

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Dr. Green finished examining his patient, made a couple of notes and handed the chart to the nurse. "Has he regained consciousness at all?"

"He's drifted in and out most of the day."

"Has anyone been able to find out his name?"

The nurse shook her head. "No. He's awake long enough to ask for something for pain, but that's about all."

"Well, I'm not surprised. He has a bad concussion, plus going through surgery. Maybe tomorrow we can find out something about him. He probably has family somewhere who are worried. From the boots he was wearing, he wasn't a normal hitchhiker. A down-on-his-luck fellow doesn't wear full-quill ostrich Ropers."

"Yeah, I'm sure he'll be thrilled when he wakes up to learn he has only one boot."

"Well, he'll probably be happier to know he has only one boot than he would be to wake up and find out he has only one leg." The doctor turned to exit the room.

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The man lying in the bed could hear voices and knew they were talking about him. He kept asking, "What's happened to me?" But the strangers seemed to be ignoring him as they continued with their conversation. *Why don't they answer me?*

He kept listening to them talk and wondered why he would have a concussion and what did they mean when they said he could have lost a leg? *Do I have both my legs?* He felt pain in his lower extremities but he felt pain all over so he just wasn't sure if his legs were all right. He tried with all his might to open his eyes, but the eyelids just wouldn't cooperate.

*I have to find out what's happening to me. Maybe I can lift my arm and get their attention.* He tried but his arms felt as though they weighed a hundred pounds each.

Nothing about his body was cooperating with him. His brain was sending out commands but to no avail.

*Help me, please help me.* The harder he tried the more frustrated he became. His thoughts became a mass of confusion as the pounding in his head beat a rhythm like a frenzied drummer. He prayed this would all be over soon.

*I've got to have some relief.* That was the last thought that passed through his mind before he drifted into a restless sleep.

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Skylar picked up the telephone receiver, dialed the number to the Denton County Sheriff's Office and asked for Dan Tate. The call was transferred, and she heard a couple of rings before the click of the call being answered came over the wire.

"Deputy Tate. Can I help you?"

"I sure hope you can," Skylar said when she heard her friend's voice.

"Skylar McCrea. To what do I owe the privilege of a phone call from you?"

"I heard a guy was hit by a car out close to my place Sunday night."

"Yeah. It appears to be a hit and run. Did you do it? Is that why you're calling?"

Skylar laughed at the teasing question from the deputy. "No. I didn't even know about it until late Monday morning, but I found a leather jacket lying beside the road and thought it might belong to the fellow."

"Could be, but right now, I can't tell you. We haven't been able to question him. He was pretty messed up from what I understand. Hopefully, today he'll feel up to talking, and we can get a lead on what happened. He didn't have any identification on him. Was there anything in the jacket?"

"No. Just the initials JBC inside the jacket."

"That's too bad. A driver's license would have really helped."

Skylar heard Dan sigh. "Well, if you find out he's missing a leather jacket, let me know. I'll bring it by the station the next time I'm in town, unless you want to see it sooner."

“No. That’ll be fine. We don’t even know if the jacket and the man match.”

“Okay, talk to you later, Dan. Give Trina my love.”

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The Wednesday after the accident, Dr. Green entered his patient’s room to find the mystery man staring at the TV on the wall. “It’s good to see you awake. I’m Dr. Russell Green, the fellow who put those casts on you.”

The patient turned his face toward him, his skin pale beneath the bruises. The man had a blank look on his face, but Dr. Green could see panic in his patient’s eyes. “Is something wrong?” He placed a chair beside the hospital bed and seated himself so he would be on eye-level with his patient.

“I don’t know my name.” The man’s breathing began to increase. “I’ve got to have a name. I’ve got to have a past. Who am I?” The man was frantic and his breathing was increasing by the second.

“Now try to calm down. Take some slow, deep breaths for me.” Dr. Green spoke softly and kept a watchful eye on his patient. “After an experience like you’ve had, it’s not uncommon to block things from your memory. I’m sure this is only temporary.”

His breathing was still a little ragged, and the panic remained in his eyes, but the man looked as though he was becoming somewhat calmer. “Is it common to block *everything* out? I don’t remember anything before flashing lights and terrible pain. Did I have any identification?”

“Not that we found. We were hoping you could give us that information. What do you remember?”

The patient rubbed his free hand through his hair. “I remember waking up in excruciating pain and seeing a lot of colored, flashing lights and hearing a lot of people yelling.”

“As I said, it’s normal to block out a traumatic experience. It’ll all come back to you.” Dr. Green tried to sound encouraging. “The police searched the immediate area where you were found, but, as I understand it, they came up empty. There were no abandoned cars in the area either, so they figure you must have been hitchhiking somewhere.”

“So, there’s nothing to give me a clue to my identity?”

“Nothing that we can lay our hands on right now. We’ll run a few more tests, but I’m sure you’ll have your memory back in a day or so. Just try to rest. The police want to question you, but I’ll hold them off for a couple more days. You need to get your strength back.”

The man turned toward him, fear still evident in his eyes. “Are you sure I’ll get my memory back? Are you sure this is only temporary?”

Dr. Green sighed heavily. “I can’t give you a guarantee, but like I said, you’ve suffered a terrible trauma. It’s not uncommon for this to happen. We’ll pray it’s temporary.”

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The man watched the doctor leave the room and then looked around his unfamiliar surroundings. Who was he? The question kept running through his mind. He had to have a past. He didn’t just suddenly appear out of nowhere. His head began to throb again. He didn’t know if the pain was from his injuries or from the frustration he was feeling.

*Do I have a wife and children? What did I do to earn a living?* He looked down at his hands. They were soft and smooth. *I guess whatever I did it wasn’t manual labor.* He shook his head as if trying to jar something loose that would help him remember but all it did was make his head throb even more. Placing his hands on either side of his head, he attempted to stop the pounding but it didn’t help. He might not know much else at the moment, but he did know enough to push the red button to get a nurse to bring him something to take the pain away. He knew when the medicine began to work that at least for a time he would free his mind of all thoughts.

## Chapter Two

Friday morning Skylar drove into Denton to do some errands and took the jacket by the Sheriff's office. Her friend, Dan, told her the mystery man was still a mystery. Apparently he had amnesia and remembered nothing about his past life. The jacket held no clues for now. Dan decided he would hold on to it in case the accident victim recovered his memory and recognized it.

"What's going to happen to the fellow if his memory doesn't return?" Skylar asked as she was leaving Dan's office.

"I don't know. I guess you'd have to ask Russell Green that question."

"Russell's his doctor?"

"Yeah," he grabbed a file from his desk and started out the door. "Skylar, I have to be in court in thirty minutes. I'll see you later." Grinning, he called back over his shoulder, "Hey, should I bother to go see your nag next week at the Fort Worth horse show?"

"If you want some good entertainment, you'd better," she followed him down the hallway.

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Jake shoved the posthole digger into the hard ground. Sweat drenched his short, black hair beneath his Texas Rangers cap. Tugging it off, he wiped the moisture from his forehead with the tail of his western-cut work shirt. Settling the cap back on his head, he decided to take a breather.

Stretching, he listened to the country music blaring from the radio in his pickup. Redigo had sent him out earlier to replace some of the old, wooden fence posts with new, metal t-posts along the front property line. It was a backbreaking job, but the beat of the music helped him establish a rhythm. He strode to the old pickup.

Once at the truck, he reached into the cooler and drew out a cold bottle of water. With a quick twist, he

snapped the seal and removed the cap. He guzzled the icy liquid as he rested on the ground in the shade of his truck.

Cooled off by the water and rest, he stood and grabbed the digger once again. Moving down to the last section of the fence, he raised the long tool and dropped it with a thud. Pulling the handles apart he lifted and hauled out a chunk of black, Texas soil and dumped it off to the side. As he did, he noticed the sun glinting off something shiny a couple of feet away.

Jake thrust the posthole digger back into the same hole and left it to check out the shining object. "Probably somebody's soft drink can," he muttered to himself as he crossed the grassy ground.

"Huh, what's this?" Jake picked up a leather briefcase. "Now, how did you get here?" He scratched the side of his head and looked up and down the road in front of him. Turning it over in his hands, he noticed the initials JBC engraved in the brass plate beneath the handle. He pressed the buttons next to the latches—nothing happened.

"Well, I guess somebody else'll have to figure out who you belong to." He chuckled; his habit of talking to himself had brought many teasing jabs from his friends over the years. Good thing none of them were around now. He took the case back to his truck and flipped the back seat forward before dropping the briefcase into the narrow space behind it. He'd give it to Redigo when he got finished.

After setting all the posts and stringing the barbwire, Jake drove to the feed store to pick up some grain for the horses. Back at the ranch, he unloaded the feed and stacked it in the barn and then got caught up in the chores he needed to do around the Lazy M ranch.

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"Look, I'm tired of this designer gown you people furnish. Do I have any clothes here?" the patient asked the nurse as she came to check his vital signs again.

The nurse finished listening to his heart and lungs before she answered his question. "Well, you were dressed when they found you on the road, but your clothing suffered as much as you did, if not more."

“And just what does that mean?” The look on his face must have been comical because Jan Ingram laughed at him.

“The paramedics cut your shirt and pants off you. Then, when you got to the hospital, someone in ER had to cut your right boot off.” Jan shrugged. “About all that’s left untouched is your left boot and a sock.” She paused and took a deep breath. “I’m sorry, but it was save your life or your clothes.” She lifted her right eyebrow and looked directly at him. “Most of the nurses agree they made the right decision when they chose to save you. Wouldn’t you agree?”

He grinned at her teasing. “Yeah, I guess so.” Then with a heavy sigh he replied, “Well, that’s great. Since I have no clothes, no money and no earthly idea who I am, I guess I am destined to spend the rest of my life in one of these lovely gowns.”

Jan gave him a big smile as she looked up from the clipboard where she had been making some notes. “I must say you do look better in it than most people. At least that faded green does bring out the color of your eyes.”

He rolled his eyes and smiled back. “Thanks a lot.”

Placing the pen in her uniform pocket, she sat down in the chair beside the bed. “I have some good news for you.”

“That’ll be a change.”

“We nurses decided we couldn’t refer to you as ‘the patient in room 244’ forever, so we decided to call you Duke Green.”

For the first time, he laughed. He did it without thinking about the mess he was in, and it would have felt really good if it hadn’t hurt his head so much. After catching his breath, he asked, “Just where did you come up with a name like that? I thought most unidentified patients were referred to as John or Jane Doe.”

Nurse Jan Ingram nodded her head. “That’s true, but you’re different. You need an identity of your own. So we took a very scientific approach to finding you one.”

His smile widened. “So now I’m a science experiment?”

Jan laughed. “No. We just thought long and hard about a name for you. Since you came in with one boot, we